

00103

1961/04/13

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MEMORANDUM FOR: General Maxwell D. Taylor

1. Following is the text of a precedence EMERGENCY cable sent
to at Puerto Cabezas on 13 April 1961 by the
Project chief:

(a) Please advise EMERGENCY precedence if your experi-
ences during the last few days have in any way changed your
evaluation of the Brigade.

(b) For your information: The President has stated that
under no conditions will U. S. intervene with any U. S. forces.

2. Following is the text of Hawkins reply of the same day:

(a) My observations the last few days have increased my
confidence in the ability of this force to accomplish not only
initial combat missions but also the ultimate objective of Castro's
overthrow.

(b) Reference (Paragraph 1 above) arrived during the final
briefing of the Brigade and Battalion commanders. They now
know all details of the plan and are enthusiastic. These officers
are young, vigorous, intelligent and motivated with a fanatical
urge to begin battle for which most of them have been preparing
in the rugged conditions of training camps for almost a year. I
have talked to many of them in their language. Without exception,
they have utmost confidence in their ability to win. They say
they know their own people and believe after they have inflicted
one serious defeat upon opposing forces, the latter will melt
away from Castro, who they have no wish to support. "They say
it is Cuban tradition to join a winner and they have supreme con-
fidence they will win all engagements against the best Castro has
to offer. I share their confidence.

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1. COPY OF 5. COMINT

(c) The Brigade is well organized and is more heavily armed and better equipped in some respects than U. S. infantry units. The men have received intensive training in the use of their weapons, including more firing experience than U. S. troops would normally receive. I was impressed with the serious attitude of the men as they arrived here and moved to their ships. Movements were quiet, disciplined and efficient, and the embarkation was accomplished with remarkable smoothness.

(d) The Brigade now numbers 1,400; a truly formidable force.

(e) I have also carefully observed the Cuban Air Force. The aircraft are kept with pride and some of the B-26 crews are so eager to commence contemplated operations that they have already armed their aircraft. informed me today that he considers the B-26 squadrom equal to the best U. S. Air Force squadron.

(f) The Brigade officers do not expect help from U. S. Armed Forces. They ask only for continued delivery of supplies. This can be done covertly.

(g) This Cuban Air Force is motivated, strong, well trained, armed to the teeth, and ready. I believe profoundly that it would be a serious mistake for the United States to deter it from its intended purpose.

Distribution:

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